

MICHIGAN STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT 2012-2013 John G. Bizon, MD

December 3, 2012

The Honorable Paul Opsommer, Chairman
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Chairman Opsommer:

I would like to offer the support of the Michigan State Medical Society to Senate Bill 756, legislation concerning limiting the use of cell phones for teenagers while driving only for cases of emergency. MSMS has policy supporting the complete ban of usage of cell phones while driving, which puts the safety of the driver and those around them before a simple phone call.

We understand that there is an occasional need to make a phone call while driving, but as the phones have evolved, we now not only make phone calls, but read e-mails, look at pictures of our friends and family, check in to certain locations, bank, and the list goes on and on. The driver's responsibility should be on the road, those around them, and ensuring a safe travel. During an emergency, all drivers should have the ability to use their phones when it is absolutely needed and we feel this legislation accomplishes that.

Several studies conducted throughout the nation confirm our fears about usage of cell phones and driving. The ability of the driver to react in the proper manner while driving during a critical situation is greatly diminished while using cell phones. Some claim that the usage of hands-free devices can bring some of the accident numbers down, but studies have also shown that even with the use of these devices the brain's ability to concentrate on the road ahead is deterred due to the conversation over the phone.

We applaud the intent of this bill and whole heartily support these efforts moving forward. Thank you for the opportunity to comment of this legislation and these efforts to keep our children safe. Text messages and phone calls can wait, the safety of all cannot.

Sincerely,



John G. Bizon, MD
President

c. Julie L. Novak, Executive Director, MSMS
Colin J. Ford, Senior Director, State and Federal Government Relations, MSMS